

NEW SHOREHAM SEWER AND WATER COMMISSION
JOINT MONTHLY MEETING
Tuesday • January 20, 2015 • 4 p.m.
Town Hall, Old Town Road, Block Island

PRESENT were SEWER Commission members: Chair Peter McNerney, Wayne Battey, Martha Ball, Tom Doyle, Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

PRESENT were WATER Commission members: Peter McNerney, Wayne Battey, Martha Ball, Tom Doyle, Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

ALSO PRESENT were: Sewer Superintendent Christopher Blane, Water Superintendent John Breunig, Finance Director Amy Land, Administrative Assistant Mona Helterline, and BI Times reporter.

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 4 p.m. by P.McNerney.

JOINT WATER and SEWER DISTRICT

1. Acceptance of resignation from Sandra Finizia with regret.

On January 5th, 2015, the New Shoreham Town Council accepted Sandra Finizia's resignation from the Sewer and Water District Commissions. The Commission expressed their appreciation for her service. Finizia had served on the Commissions since 2008.

2. Acknowledge Martha Ball's move to full-time member.

On December 17, 2014, the New Shoreham Town Council appointed Martha Ball to a full position on the Sewer and Water District Commissions, term running through May 1, 2019.

3. Welcome new members, Terri Chmiel and Tom Doyle

On December 17, 2014, the New Shoreham Town Council appointed Terri Chmiel to an alternate position on the Sewer and Water District Commissions, term running through May 1, 2015.

On January 5th, 2015, the New Shoreham Town Council appointed Thomas Doyle to the Sewer and Water District Commissions, term running through May 1, 2015.

4. Election of Officers:

The departure of Sandra Finizia and Allan MacKay left the positions of Chair of the Water Commission and Vice Chair of the Sewer Commission vacant.

- **Chair and Vice-Chair of New Shoreham Water Commission**

P. McNerney nominated Brad Marthens for the position of Chair on the New Shoreham Water Commission; there were no other nominations for the position.

MOTION by P. McNerney that B. Marthens be appointed as Chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Doyle, Battey, Ball, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

P. McNerney nominated Thomas Doyle for the position of Vice-chair on the New Shoreham Water Commission; there were no other nominations for the position.

MOTION by P. McNerney that T. Doyle be appointed as Vice-chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Doyle, Battey, Ball, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

- **Vice-Chair of New Shoreham Sewer Commission**

P. McNerney nominated Wayne Battey for the position of Vice-chair on the New Shoreham Sewer Commission; there were no other nominations for the position.

MOTION by P. McNerney that W. Battey be appointed as Vice-chair of the New Shoreham Sewer Commission. Seconded by T. Doyle.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Doyle, Battey, Ball, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

5. Discussion and Potential Action regarding December 12, 2014 minutes.

MOTION by P. McNerney to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2014 meeting as presented. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Doyle, Battey, Ball, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

WATER DISTRICT

6. Financials and Aging

Finance Director, Amy Land presented the financial report for December 2014, highlighted as follows:

- Water usage revenue was up by 2% compared to last year.
- Expenditures were down by approximately 7% compared to last year.
- Regarding penalty fees and allocation, in prior years more customers had opted to purchase allocation in order to avoid 3rd quarter penalty fees.
- When reviewing aging, P. McNerney stated there were quite a few high balances over 90 days. The discussion continued as to what those amounts were comprised of and what action was being taken.
- This prompted discussion regarding situations where a customer's tenant was not paying their portion of the sewer/water bill- who was responsible? It was confirmed that ultimately the property owner/utility account holder is responsible for keeping the account in good standing.

7. Water Operations Report

Water Superintendent J. Breunig focused on updating the Commission on the progress of RO 3. A majority of this project would be funded by the remainder of USDA funds obtained for the Well 4A project. Breunig explained that the loan portion of a USDA grant/loan was spent first, and then the grant portion could be used, meaning that the remaining funds being used for RO3 were essentially "free money". USDA is requiring Breunig to gather at least three quotes for all of the larger components of the project, a time consuming task.

SEWER DISTRICT

8. Financials and Aging

Finance Director reported that user fees were slightly behind budget. Though a minor difference, if this trend continued the cumulative effect would prove more dramatic. When reviewing the aging report, the discussion revolved around a customer with an extremely high, long outstanding balance and what should be done. Options discussed in the past included pulling the meter or plugging the sewer line, but both options were discarded due to unfavorable and potentially hazardous consequences. P. McNerney stated that this issue had to be rectified and could not carry on through the summer. A. Land stated that the only payments received on the account in the past had been a result of communication to the customer's lawyer. It was agreed that the Commission's lawyer needs to be consulted regarding how to proceed. It was clarified that the Commission may not cut off service immediately. The delinquent bill policy must be followed and equally applied to all past due accounts. A. Land stated that she could move forward with this process, but reminded the Commission that this meant other things may get put on the back burner. It was noted that M. Helderline could help with some of the manual labor in order to speed up the process.

9. Sewer Operations Report

Sewer Superintendent C. Blane presented the monthly operations report, highlighted as follows:

- 2,085,000 gallons of effluent were treated in December versus 1,460,000 in December 2013, an increase of 43%.
- The new roof on the blower building had been completed.

- Significant infiltration during a heavy storm was traced to a manhole on Corn Neck Road (near Yellow Kittens) where some repair work was done last year.

The Commission asked what the plan was to repair the Corn Neck Road manhole. C. Blane stated that there were two options: have a contractor inject an expandable foam which is intended to make a tight seal, or dig up the manhole, a significantly more expensive and labor intensive option. It was agreed that the foam should be tried first.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN FORUM.

10. Commissioners' Announcements.

P. McNerney announced that the New Shoreham Wastewater Treatment Plant was awarded the 2015 Regional EPA Wastewater Treatment Plant Operation and Maintenance Award. This is the second time the Wastewater Treatment Plant has won this prestigious award (also won in 1994). Superintendent C. Blane will be attending the Annual NEWEA Awards Luncheon on January 28, 2015 to formally accept the award. He will have more details on the award next month.

11. Public Comment for items not on the agenda.

J. Breunig announced that he had received an official notice of retirement from Principal Water Operator Jimmy Collins effective February 2, 2015. Breunig will be posting the job opening immediately.

As a result of this news, P. McNerney asked the Commission what their availability was to attend a special meeting the next week. McNerney stated that this had nothing to do with the posting of the job opening, but instead the more general topic of proper coverage at the plants.

Discussion continued regarding the urgency required to fill the position. J. Breunig stated that he would like to hire someone as soon as possible and have them ready to take a test by April (Water Operator Treatment License). The process of posting was also discussed briefly.

12. Adjournment.

MOTION by P. McNerney to adjourn at 4:51 p.m. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Doyle, Battey, Ball, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mona Helterline
District Clerk

ACCEPTED: 2/19/15